

Mike Parr

Going Home, 2023

Single-channel video, 4:28:42; lithograph on paper,
edition of 20

Staged at Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne, in December 2023, this four-and-a-half-hour performance unfolded through acts of inscription and erasure. With closed eyes, Parr painted onto the gallery walls a series of quotations drawn from public commentary on the Israel–Gaza conflict, each line read aloud to him by an assistant. The writing, produced without sight, was uneven and physically strained, accumulating into dense fields of unstable text.

In a second action, Parr smeared over the words with vivid red pigment, at once obscuring their meaning and imbuing them with a visceral intensity. Due to its inherently political and confrontational nature, this performance and its aftermath provoked widespread and ongoing debate. While the work in its completed state remained on view, the ensuing controversy surrounding the performance led to the end of Parr's decades-long relationship with the gallery.

The work is emotionally raw and charged with imagery of erasure, dispossession and violent return, resonating unmistakably with the struggle of Palestine. As an artwork, *Going Home* never claimed neutrality: it confronts the viewer with the instability of language under political pressure and the urgency of resistance in the face of atrocity.

Whangārei Art Museum gratefully acknowledges Liz Eastmond, whose initiative enabled the inclusion of this work.

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I AM NOT LEAVING

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UNTIL YOU HAVE GIVEN ME

$\perp_2 + \wedge^{\circ}$

YOUR SPEECH

Oscar Perry

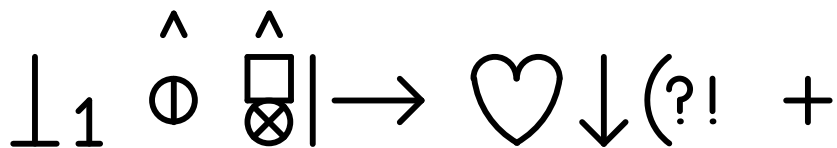
Satellite Communication System 2 (Thrasher), 2025

Lada 2104 station wagon (1987), steel, timber, antenna structure, audio installation

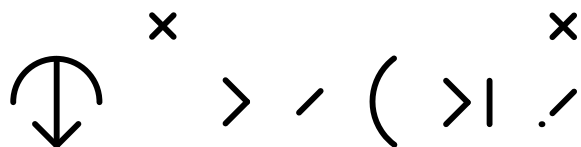
This work continues Perry's long-standing interest in the paranoid, feverish underbelly of late-20th century history, particularly the cryptic psycho-social excesses of the cold war. Here, a late-'80s Lada, quintessentially Soviet in its boxy, intractable utilitarianism, sits partially ensconced in the stumpy half-tube of a corrugated iron shed, like a miniature aircraft hangar or a pathetically insubstantial bomb shelter. Atop this edifice, a cluster of directional radio antennae extend an invisible conduit skyward, allowing for the possibilities of both reception and transmission.

From within the Lada emanates an auditory collage of drones, fragmentary speech, static and stray snatches of music: a signal that is equal parts code and residual detritus. Once perhaps intended as covert, encoded streams of information, these quanta now register as a serendipitous assemblage of found sounds, lent meaning only by a sort of auditory pareidolia. Here, their furtive semantic payload finds a cathartic release by being incorporated into a repetitive aural tapestry.

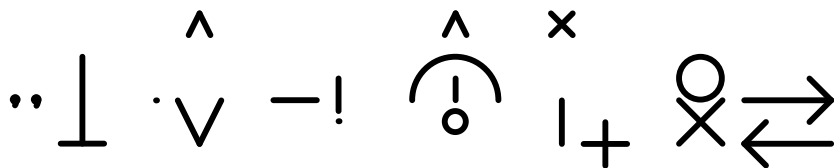
In Perry's hands, the Lada becomes a home-brew numbers station playing host to a spectral exorcism-slash-road-trip. Both broadcaster and receiver, it serves as a ham-shack monument to a class of messages that drift between meaning and unmeaning.



I AM SENDING TERRORS AND



INTIMATIONS OF THE FUTURE TO THOSE



WHO CANNOT CALCULATE THEIR MOVEMENTS

Darpa Press

A Lesson in Bliss, 2024

Single-channel video loop (4:41:21);

traffolyte signage, edition of 10

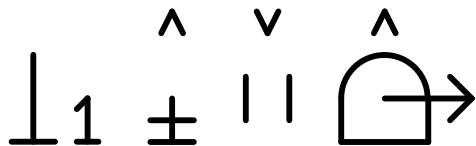
Darpa—a publisher of artists' books, applications, anthologies, correspondence, and secrets—presents a video lesson in the work of Austrian-Australian semiotician Charles K. Bliss (1897–1985). Bliss' legacy is Blissymbolics, a constructed language of ideographic symbols that aimed to eliminate ambiguity in communication between speakers of disparate languages. Each symbol represents a basic idea or object that can be combined in long chains to create more complex words and statements.

Blissymbolics espouse a utopic logic that connects universal clarity with universal peace, through the elimination of misunderstanding. However, to imagine a language without misunderstanding is to misunderstand language; the project was a failure on its own terms, and Charles Bliss's efforts over forty years to develop its adoption were desperate, isolated, and half-mad.

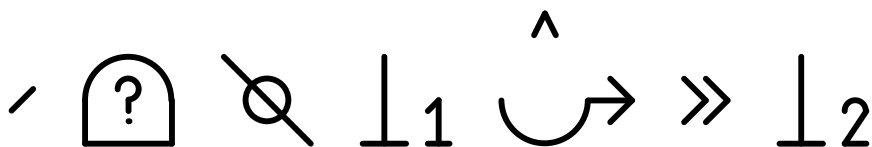
Darpa, under its secretary Rowan McNaught, treats the moribund condition of the language not as an endpoint but as a source of reconciliatory potential, reframing it as an aesthetic technology, as essential as it is impractical. The work on display simulates a "video tachistoscope," a device used to teach speed-reading. McNaught suggests the viewer

may feel it is both too fast and too much. At a certain point, the idea goes, you may start to feel it rather than think it. Let the shapes hover between symbol and open image. The symbols might decouple from their spoken meanings and become merely beautiful. Watch for a while or visit over a few days. You might find that you're spellbound rather than fluent.

Bliss's symbols, like his life, are full of longing, contradiction, and wounded dreams. To learn them is to enter into an un-finalisable encounter with their creator, and with those who still love them and take them up.



I HAVE NEARLY FORGOTTEN



THE SECRET NAME I CARRY FOR YOU



IN MY MIND OR A BOOK

Marie Shannon

Love Notes, 2005 — I Love You #1, I Love You #2,

I.L.Y #1, I.L.Y #2

Silver gelatin prints, selenium toned

The photographs in Marie Shannon's *Love Notes* series document (or, perhaps, *are*) small moments of linguistic intimacy. Each work depicts a hand-written note consisting of the simple phrase "I love you," or its abbreviation "I. L. Y." This intimate shorthand condenses the messy, complex compromised nature of a romantic relationship into a unitary point, while retaining in its simplicity a fractal representation of the whole.

However, by presenting these *Love Notes* via the medium of photography, Shannon deliberately introduces a nearly unlimited potential for ambiguity to the proceedings. It ought to be an unspoken truism that photographs are not the things they represent, and yet they are still granted a special exception from other artistic media as an invisible extension of the eye, of the brain or, here, of the heart. These moments of emotional honesty are presented as simulacra of themselves, a gentle reminder that this kind of "love language" is also a mediation between two internal worlds that are, and will forever remain, separated by the insurmountable boundary of individual consciousness.

These compact, domestic moments of dialogue both counterpoint and echo the grander, more public and systematic attempts at communication seen elsewhere in the exhibition, asking the viewer to consider whether the smallest, most unassuming acts might also be the most durable.

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I AM ASSIGNED WITH SOFTNESS AND WARMTH

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AND SOUL THAT YOU HAVE

Samuel Holloway, et al.
Upright Piano, 2025
painted and modified piano,
annotated score

In this work, a collaboration between Samuel Holloway and the et al. collective, a deaccessioned upright piano from the Whangarei Art Museum collection has been modified and recontextualised as the centrepiece of an installation, alongside a score comprised of pages from the *Upright Piano* archive (2013-present). This work is a product of ongoing research that also led to the 2013 work of the same name currently held in the Chartwell Collection. As in this previous work, the piano's grey paint serves as a signifier for an assumed or implied institutional impartiality, a surface that both comments on and invokes the language of utilitarianism and bureaucracy. Despite this performative gesture towards anonymity, the extreme age of this piano (dated tentatively to the 1840s) marks it with the glaring specificity of a museum specimen.

Upright pianos like this were designed as portable versions of the traditional grand piano, meaning that they were the preferred choice for import to Aotearoa in the mid-nineteenth century, becoming a cultural marker for perceived civility and refinement. The combination of piano and sheet music was a technology that allowed Western (specifically, British) music to be present in colonial homes. In this work, the multiple layers of encoding and decoding of data involved in this system are dissected and examined; the encoding of auditory (as well as social and political) data into musical notation, the reading of said data by the performer, and the performer's translation of that data into key presses, which interpret the hypothetical original.

The presence of the performer as interlocutor creates further opportunities for translation, interpolation and commentary. Any data that passes through this system will be faulty, inaccurate and compromised, but also intrinsically human.

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I AM IN DISGUISE TO YOU

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WHILE MY NAME SIFTS AND

Υ $||=$ $\diagdown$ $\Rightarrow$

FILTERS LIKE A STREAM